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Sirhan Court Bjt
LOS ANGELES AP - The
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By GENE HANDSAKER

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Sirhan Court Bjt
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LOS ANGELES AP - The
sheriff showed newsmen Tues-
day the "minifortress," court-
room-a smartly refurbis h e d
storeroom with armor plates
protecting the windows -TO
which Sirhan Bishara Sirhan will
walk about 50 feet Friday to en-
ter his plea.

The room is down a 4-foot-wide
corridor from the cell where six
deputies constantly guard the 24-
year-old Jordanian charged with
assassinating Sen. Robert F.
Kennedy.

Sirhan and the improvised
courtroom are on the 13th floor
of the 15-story Hall of Justice,
where prisoners awaiting court
appearances are jailed on the
top five floors.

Sheriff Peter J. Pitchess said
Sirhan's cell is 50 or 60 feet from
the room.

Eighty-seven assembled news-
men saw:

A low-ceilinged room, 46 by 50
feet, newly painted in eggshell
white and freshly floored with
brown asphalt tile...

Air - conditioning ducts and
trough-shaped, frosted lighting
fixtures along the nine-foot-high
ceilings...

Metal folding chairs for 79
spectators and, to the right be-
hind a rope barrier, 23 more for
sheriff's aides and other officials

Two abutting mahogany coun-
sel tables with five leather-pad-
ded chairs. Pitchess said the
seating order, left to right from
spectators' viewpoint, is expect-
ed to be: Sirhan, his attorney,
the chief prosecutor and his two
aides.

Facing them and the specta-
tors: a 6-by-8-foot plywood en-
closure, painted brown, for the
judge's desk, two steps up from
floor level. The judge, prosecu-
tion and defense have desk mi-
crophones to an amplifier sys-
tem.

Along the rear, westward wall
behind the judge: Fan - folded
drapes of light tan monk's cloth
or burlap-like material, on draw
strings.

What's behind the drapes?"
a reporter asked. A Pitchess
aide pulled the strings to reveal-
Three steel plates 6 feet wide,
7 feet, 7 inches tall and one-
quarter-inch thick, also eggshell-
white, on rollers and tracks
about two feet in from the three

windows.

The plates are for protection, so nothing can be thrown in," said Pitchess, "... explosives or a bomb."

The sheriff said the temporary courtroom has been used for storing paint, air-conditioning gear and kitchen steam kettles for the past three years.

The cost of refurbishing it as a courtroom?

I can't give you that figure," said Pitchess. The cost was already budgeted long before the Sirhan matter arose. It was part of our program for conversion of the area for use of our administrative section."

But the assassination accelerated the pre-planned program," Pitchess said.

Will the room be used for Sirhan's actual trial? I have no idea. That will be determined by the judge to whom the case is assigned."

After its use in the Sirhan case Pitchess said, Jail officers will use it to instruct deputies reporting for duty three times every 24 hours.
